Journey to the Cornfield

Hello, my name is Leslie, and I’m going to take you on a journey back in time. We're travelling back to the 1800s, to the English countryside- a place straight out of a painting by John Constable. 200 years ago, most people lived in the countryside and made their living from farming.

To make your journey more fun, I would like you to help me bring a poem about this time to life, by joining in, by creating sounds, noises, actions, and even tasting and smelling things. Don’t worry: you can do as little or as much as you like; and if you prefer, you can just sit comfortably and listen.

You will need to gather the following items to take with you on your journey. Don’t worry if you don’t have everything; you can still use your hands, voices and feet to make lots of noise, and there is plenty for you to join in with.

Right. Are you ready for your list?

You can write them down, and then stop this recording while you and your grown-ups go and find them.

It is a good idea to keep all your props close by.

OK, are you ready for the list?

* Two baking trays, jigsaw box and top, or shoebox and lid with uncooked rice, or dry cereal inside
* Bowl of water
* Dried leaves or videotape taken from an old cassette or video
* A Newspaper cut into strips
* A Pair of gardening or washing up gloves
* A piece of paper folded in half
* A Comb and or hairbrush and pencil
* Empty plastic yoghurt pots or plastic food storage containers
* A Pillowcase
* Empty Metal bowl or tray
* Water bottle filled half way with water. Make sure the lid is securely closed

**Photos and videos of these props can be found on our Sensory Journeys Website in the activities section**

Hello again. Are your props in front of you? Your grown-up can help with handing you things and joining in.

I love to tell poems that are packed with sensory activities to help you bring it to life, so let’s get started.

Our poem takes place in summer on a country lane beside a cornfield where a young boy cools himself from a stream in the afternoon.

**(Nature sounds, morning birds and sheep)**

**Oh, follow, then, my joyful step down the goodly baked brown lane.** It’s your turn now to walk down the dried mud lane. Take your shoebox and lid, trays, or jigsaw box filled with rice or cereal and walk your hands inside one at a time to make the crunching of the path. You can place these on the floor and try to walk in place with your feet too

**(Walking down a lane sound using cereal)**

**Where shepherd boy, in garb of vibrant red and gold of noon,**

**Quenches his young spirit from the babbling stream sustained**

**(Babbling brook sound)**

Can you make the sound of a babbling brook? Take your bowl with water and tap your fingers in it and or gently slosh the water in your water bottle from side to side to make the sound of a babbling brook. See if you can cup your hands to take a drink from the bowl and quench your thirst like the boy.

**(Babbling brook sound using a bowl of water)**

**And for a fleeting moment, we both savour nature's lovely tune.**

**(Late spring woodland sounds)**

Let’screate the many sounds of nature by doing the following: Hold your newspaper strips in one hand and gently brush the strips with the other, brushing slowly and quickly to make the sound of the wind blowing through the trees. If you have old video tape or real leaves, you can scrunch this up or move it from hand to hand.

 **(Wind in tree sound using newspaper)**

Now hold two gloves together in one hand and flap them to make the sounds of flapping birds.

 (**Flapping birds sound using gloves)**

You can try out the sound of birds with your voice: can you create a cooing sound like a dove? Or a cuckoo? Or even an owl?

 **(vocal bird sounds)**

Finally, run a pencil over the spokes of a comb. Does it sound like a cricket? You could try the same action with a hairbrush.

 **(Insect sounds using a comb and pencil)**

**I trace the steps of the lithe, panting dog in his fervent task,**

Let’s all be excited dogs together. Bunch your fingers together and using one of the filled trays from before, try to make the sound of a dog's paws. Make the dog run or walk slowly by changing the speed of your tapping fingers. Try panting like a dog, or even barking! **(Sound of a dog walking using cereal)**

**Guiding the gentle sheep towards pastures fresh with dew,**

**( sound of sheep bleeting)**

You can mimic the sound of the sheep’s hooves running down the lane by holding one small yogurt pot in each hand or plastic tubs with the opening facing down and tapping them in the tray filled with cereal or rice. How quickly can you go? Are the sheep baaing? Can you make that sound? Baa baaaaaa!

**(Sound of sheep running using yogurt pots)**

**The plough waits at the corner, basking in the fallow shade's mask,**

**While the farmer, in his bright smock, welcomes me anew.**

Use your voice to make a greeting. You could say 'Hello!', or ‘Morning’, or 'Good Afternoon**,** depending on the time of day**,** or just wave you hand.

**Through the open gate, I step into the mellowing rush of corn,**

**(Nature sounds in a field)**

Feel the corn under foot and swishing by your side as you walk through the fields. Hold the strips of newspaper in your hand and gently wave them in the air, then brush them against your legs. You can try this while walking in place or sitting down.

(Sound of walking in a cornfield using newspaper)

**Embraced by a blend of gold and green, with the sky arched**

**with billowing clouds above,**

Clouds may be silent but we can see them billow and imagine a sound! Take a pillow case and waft it high to low. See if the air fills the case on the way down, like a balloon**.**

**(Sound of pillow case flapping)**

**In the distance, the church clock chimes, announcing the end of morn,**

**(Sound of clock chimes ringing)**

**Join in with the church clock chiming. Take your metal bowl or tray, and gently tap it with a pencil to create the distant chimes of a church clock. If it's the end of the morning that probably means there are 12 chimes!**

 **(Sound of clock chimes using metal bowl and pencil)**

**My heart leaps with joy at the wondrous beauty that surrounds.**

**(Nature sounds)**

Take a moment now to close your eyes and just relax and listen to the sounds. Imagine you are in this poem. Create your own soundscape by choosing your favourite atmosphere sounds; will it be the newspaper strips for the rustling corn; the gloves for the birds; the comb and pencil for the insects. Or a mixture of them all?

**(Nature sounds)**

**The Foley sounds used in this recording as well as additional sounds can be listened to on our Sensory Journey Website in the sounds section under Sound library.**